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FAR-PARK-CIA;350

WASHINGTON (AP) - THE CIA HAD REASON TO KNOW AS EARLY AS 1960 THAT SOUTH KOREAN BUSINESSMAN TONGSUN PARK, KEY FIGURE IN A CONGRESSIONAL INFLUENCE-BUYING INVESTIGATION, HAD TIES WITH THE KOREAN CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY, THE WASHINGTON POST SAYS.

IN A STORY IN ITS SUNDAY EDITIONS, THE NEWSPAPER CITED PARK'S LEADERSHIP ROLE IN TWO YOUTH GROUPS FINANCIALLY SUPPORTED BY THE CIA, HIS HELP IN ARRANGING A CIA-COORDINATED VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES IN 1961 BY THE FOUNDER AND FIRST DIRECTOR OF THE KOREAN CIA AND HIS CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH AN AMERICAN CIA STATION CHIEF IN SEOUL.

THE FORMER CIA OFFICIAL, JOHN RICHARDSON, WAS QUOTED BY THE POST AS CALLING PARK ''AN AGENT OF INFLUENCE'' WITH THE KOREAN GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP.

''WE HAD A FEELING HE WAS NOT JUST AN ROK (REPUBLIC OF KOREA) CIA AGENT, BUT REPORTED HIGHER TO SOMEONE IN THE GOVERNMENT,'' RICHARDSON WAS QUOTED AS SAYING. THE POST SAID RICHARDSON AND PARK WERE GUESTS AT PARTIES IN KOREA GIVEN BY EACH OTHER BETWEEN 1969 AND 1973.

THE POST SAID CIA DIRECTOR STANSFIELD TURNER DID NOT DENY IN AN INTERVIEW THAT U.S. CIA AGENTS ''KNEW TONGSUN PARK ON A SOCIAL BASIS.''

BUT HE SAID HE HAD BEEN ASSURED ''THAT THERE IS NO CONNECTION BETWEEN TONGSUN PARK AND THE CIA OF THE UNITED STATES . . . NO OFFICIAL CONNECTION, NOT A WORKING RELATIONSHIP.''

THE POST SAID TURNER DECLINED TO CONFIRM OR DENY THAT ANYONE KNEW PARK AS AN ''AGENT OF INFLUENCE,'' SAYING ONLY: ''I HAVE BEEN ASSURED THAT ALL OF THE RELEVANT INFORMATION THE CIA HAD ON PARK OR KCIA ACTIVITIES WAS PASSED TO APPROPRIATE AUTHORITIES IN THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH OF OUR GOVERNMENT.

THE SOUTH KOREAN GOVERNMENT HAS DENIED THAT PARK HAS NEVER HAD AN OFFICIAL CONNECTION WITH IT. PARK HIMSELF SAID IN SEOUL LAST WEEK THAT HE ENTERTAINED AND GAVE CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS TO MEMBERS OF CONGRESS STRICTLY AS A PRIVATE WASHINGTON-BASED BUSINESSMAN.

PARK HAS REFUSED TO RETURN TO THE UNITED STATES TO TESTIFY BEFORE A GRAND JURY AND CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES LOOKING INTO ALLEGATIONS THAT SOUTH KOREANS ATTEMPTED TO BUY INFLUENCE WITH MEMBERS OF CONGRESS AND OTHER U.S. OFFICIALS.

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